

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS AND ROADS, GAOAGE OAGENG MOLAPISI
DELIVERED DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF ROAD P34/5 PHASE 1, 32KM FROM
SWHEIZERENEKE TO CHRISTIANA
27 OCTOBER 2020**

Dikgosi

Mayor of Mamusa Local Municipality,

MMC of Infrastructure,

Councilors,

Department of Public Works and Roads Senior Managers

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is almost the end of transport month as we begin this week by showcasing some of the projects that we successfully completed. This comes as a direct decision after cabinet decided on this year October Transport Month Theme to be "Shifting the future of Transport". Under this theme we are focusing on transport infrastructure as we understand the role that transport infrastructure as the backbone of the economy plays in shaping the future of transport.

It only makes sense that the Department of Public Works and Roads together with the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management should partner to experience and bring to you the initiatives that government has implemented in our Province, hence the Joint OTM Program as deliberated on at the media briefing held by the two Departments, on October the 2nd. Together, we can shape the future of transport and together with you we can grow the North West Province.

We note with sadness the increasing cases of COVID 19 in our country and our Province. The President has opened up the economy in order to start activities that will resuscitate the economy and we must agree that with all measures taken it has been a mammoth task. We are also doing our part in getting back the economy to where it was before the 2nd quarter

wherein 2 million South Africans lost their jobs. The Department is looking into tapping into all grants starting with the R100 billion Infrastructure Grant and the recent announced grant set aside for rural roads. We understand that the objective of government is to create massive employment through these initiatives and to restore the massive job losses experienced during the pandemic. It cannot be easy hence government partnered with NEDLAC as part of the social compact to achieve this objective.

I am certain that we all can play a role more especially the private sector. Last week when I was in Ngaka Modiri Molema, I challenged contractors to exploit economic opportunities in seeing how we can best deliver quality roads infrastructure without spending the millions of Rands that we are already spending by upgrading our roads from surface to tar. It is a fact that we need at least R37 billion if we are to upgrade all our roads in the Province of which the majority of those unpaved roads are in this District and Ngaka Modiri Molema. It should also be noted that it will take 10 more years to achieve this goal should we have resources readily available to achieve this.

We therefore need a change of strategy, looking at our limited financial resources and I still say show me the alternative building material. I am sure that somewhere in the Dr. RSM District there are engineers that can come to our rescue by providing a solution that will be a winner for our communities. It cannot be left alone to government to bring solutions to resolve the problems are communities are faced with.

There are at least 40 roads that have been identified by communities in this District that need to be upgraded as a matter of urgency and we all know that it seems almost impossible looking at our financial muscle. However, should a solution that is different from the way we usually and currently doing things be provided, we might achieve quality roads that are on par with other Districts elsewhere in the Province, within a short period of time and within

budget? I am saying it is possible and we are awaiting your suggestions and workable solutions.

I once came over here to perform oversight on this road and I found employees having put tools down due to different reasons. This behaviour has become a norm in most of our roads project and I want to appeal to all of us gathered here today to work together in future as I understand that this is phase 1, meaning phase 2 will follow and we should have taken valuable lessons from phase 1.

Stoppage time or interruptions to projects if it is not due to natural causes means that the Department will have to incur those expenses and therefore there might be a delay in the project as we only work with what was budgeted for and we will have to justify why the need to get a varying amount from what we initially budgeted. At times it becomes worse to an extent that projects cannot even be completed. It is a serious issue that we should consider with earnestness and educate the community on the ramifications of such actions.

Phase 1 of this project started in October 2019 and we are expecting to complete Phase 2 by April 2021. The investment on this project is R75, 4 million and the total budget envisaged to be used for both phases is R109 million. The work that was done on the first 32km was to rehabilitate and surface the road not to start a new road. It is one of our maintenance projects in the District. You will note that routine maintenance is continuing on all our roads in the District. We are excited that at least 106 people received work opportunities as well as being trained in various technical and life skills. At least 10 subcontracting opportunities were awarded to locals with a total investment of R24 million.

Lastly I would like to remind you that we are still under regulated restrictions and Corona Virus is still here as the world is still searching for the vaccine. Let us take the necessary precautions and be responsible in our behavior.

I thank you.